Above the Influence

Effective and Relevant to Youth, ONDCP’s ‘Above the Influence’ Campaign Supports Prevention Efforts of Communities Across the Country

A Brand that Speaks to Teens

ONDCP’s multi-tiered “Above the Influence” (ATI) Campaign provides sound information to young people about the dangers of drug use and strengthens efforts to prevent drug use in communities.

In 2010, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign re-launched the ATI youth brand with broad prevention messaging at the national level – including television, print and Internet advertising – as well as more targeted efforts at the local level. Since the re-launch, results from the Campaign’s year-round tracking study of teens consistently show that more than 85 percent of teens are aware of the ATI brand, and that more than three-quarters of teens say the ATI message speaks to someone like them – regardless of race, gender, or ethnicity.

More important, teens who are aware of or interacted with ATI have significantly stronger anti-drug beliefs than teens who are not aware of or do not interact with ATI.

Engaging Communities Directly

To foster participation at the community level, the Campaign partners with hundreds of youth-serving organizations in communities across the country and provides technical assistance and training to community organizations through conference workshops and webinars, with the objectives of:

1. Actively engaging youth at the local level to allow them to participate directly in the ATI Campaign;
2. Providing local youth-serving organizations with a recognized, national platform to further their specific drug-prevention goals and initiatives; and
3. Providing localized ATI advertising – including posters and outdoor ads featuring artwork created by teens across partner communities to generate additional awareness.
ONDCP seeks to foster healthy individuals and safe communities by effectively leading the Nation’s effort to reduce drug use and its consequences.

March 2012
**ATI is Valuable to Communities**

Community partners have embraced the ATI Campaign and have used the ATI activities as a new way to engage youth in a dialogue about the negative effects of substance use. ATI community partners have used the ATI Campaign as a valuable asset to which they can anchor their individual youth substance abuse prevention programs, thereby furthering their respective youth-serving missions.

Coalition of Behavioral Health Services (a Drug Free Communities Support Program grantee in Houston, Texas)

Teens from the Coalition of Behavioral Health Services conducted a week of “Above the Influence” activities during a local art festival, including the “Tag It” activity, creation of an ATI art mural that traveled to various Houston-area locations, teen panel discussions, and a free concert by a local hip-hop dance group.

“We want our teens to develop what we call ‘influence literacy,’ which means having a clear understanding of those people, places, and things in their lives that influence them in a positive way toward their goals and dreams, and those people, places, and things — such as alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs — that are negative influences which can derail their personal dreams.”

—Sandy Olson, executive director of the Coalition of Behavioral Health Services and the Partnership for a Drug-Free Spring Branch

Kent County Prevention Coalition (a Drug Free Communities grantee in Grand Rapids, Michigan)

Teens from the Kent County Prevention Coalition took on the challenge of making a movie discussing the negative pressures and influences in their lives, and how they rise above them. The 30-minute movie premiered at a local Kent County movie theater. Teens used the ATI Toolkit as a guide for the activities and discussions captured in the movie.

“**To have the national support through ATI, and to be part of something larger than just your community, has been great. It’s allowed us to open doors and develop strong partnerships that have blossomed.**”

—Shannon Cohen, Program Director, Kent County Prevention Coalition
Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club (Bronx, NY)

After completing the ATI art project, Yolanda Brisbane-Baird, unit director at the Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club, challenged her youth to form their own ATI team to design ATI-themed events throughout the year. ATI-related activities included: (1) a Valentine’s Teen Party, where teens featured an alcohol-free teen bar; teens who submitted their ATI artwork were admitted for $1 versus $5; (2) a "Stop Bullying – Speak Up" town hall meeting sponsored by Cartoon Network and Cablevision. Youth conducted the ATI “Tag It” activity before the event and showcased their “tags” during the town hall meeting; and (3) a large wall display in the lobby of the club dedicated to ATI, with a new ATI theme each month.

In an evaluation of the Campaign’s community-level efforts, community partners reported that local ATI activities were useful to their organizations in meeting their missions to serve youth. Further, the ATI Campaign activities continue to be replicated in local communities around the country, with roughly three-quarters of community partners saying they would highly recommend ATI activities to other youth-serving organizations.

ATI community-level activities are having a measured impact on youth as well. Not only did 91 percent of teen participants favorably rate the ATI activities, but teens’ perceptions of the risks associated with drug and alcohol use also increased after participating in ATI activities.
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March 2012

Above the Influence (ATI): Community Engagement (FY 2012)

- Community involved in implementing local ATI activities
- Community participated in ATI webinar training
Resources for Stakeholders

ATI Activities Toolkit includes:

- **Influence Video Discussion Guide**: Opens up a dialogue with teens about influences they face; builds “influence literacy”
- **“Tag It”**: Empowers teens to identify and reject negative influences
- **“Be It”**: Challenges teens to create their own personal positive slogans/brands in 6 words or less
- **“Bring It”**: Strengthens teens’ resistance skills through role playing scenarios
- **ATI Art Project**: Uses visual/artistic expression to convey what being “Above the Influence” means to teens

Find Toolkit and supporting materials: [www.atipartnerships.com](http://www.atipartnerships.com)

Visit us on [www.abovetheinfluence.com](http://www.abovetheinfluence.com) and [www.facebook.com/abovetheinfluence](http://www.facebook.com/abovetheinfluence)

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